

Message Text

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SUBJ: ROK PRESS REACTION TO ROK-JAPAN MINISTERIAL TALKS

REF: SEOUL 7229 (DTG 161020Z SEP 75)

SUMMARY: ROK PRESS REACTION TO ROK-JAPAN MINISTERIAL MEETING HAS BECOME SLIGHTLY MORE CRITICAL AS GLOW OF FIRST OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS (REFTEL) HAS WORN OFF AND REALIZATION HAS SET IN THAT MEETINGS DID NOT GET DOWN TO SPECIFICS ON SUCH ISSUES AS KOREAN SECURITY AND LEVELS OF JAPANESE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. MOST PAPERS, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO TAKE BALANCED AND UNEMOTIONAL VIEW AND ARE PREPARED TO WAIT AND SEE HOW WORKING LEVEL TALKS TURN OUT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS CARRIED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF EIGHTH ROK-JAPAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE FOR SEVERAL DAYS AFTER MEETING ENDED WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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COVERAGE MOVING FROM FRONT PAGES TO EDITORIAL SECTION BY SEPTEMBER 17. FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IN ALL PAPERS EMPHASIZED PLANS TO EXPAND GOVERNMENT-LEVEL ECONOMIC TIES AND TO HOLD OCTOBER WORKING-LEVEL MEETING IN SEOUL TO DEAL WITH LOANS. POLITICAL ISSUES

(KOREAN SECURITY, N-S RELATIONS, KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN) RECEIVED LESS COVERAGE IN NEWS ARTICLES THAN ECONOMIC ISSUES, THOUGH EDITORIALS GAVE THEM CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION. ALTHOUGH THE TONE OF FRONT PAGE COVERAGE WAS FAVORABLE, NO PAPERS ASSESSED THE MEETING IN SUPERLATIVES. MOST ENTHUSIASM WAS GENERATED BY TONG-A ILBO SEPTEMBER 16, WHICH SAID THAT "FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ROK AND JAPAN WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PEACE OF N.E. ASIA".

2. EDITORIALS SIMILARLY HAVE KEPT TREATMENT OF THE TALKS IN LOW REGISTER AND ENTHUSIASM WAS MUTED. MOST PAPERS WELCOMED THE HOLDING OF THE MEETING AFTER SUCH A LONG PERIOD OF DIPLO-MATIC CONFRONTATION BUT WERE ALSO CRITICAL OF THE MEETING'S OUTCOME. SEOUL SHINMUN WAS TYPICAL WHILE WELCOMING AGREEMENT THAT MINISTERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD CONTINUE COMBINED EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND REDUCE TENSION ON THE PENINSULA AT UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES, AND CONTINUE TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS, PAPER CRITICIZED COMMUNIQUE AS "FURTHER OBSCURING JAPAN'S TRADITIONAL STAND SUPPORTING PEACE AND STABILITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA". CONTRASTING COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE WITH EQUIVALENT CLAUSE IN FORD-MIKI ANNOUNCEMENT, SEOUL SHINMUN EDITORIAL CRITICIZED NOT ONLY VAGUENESS BUT ABSENCE OF DIRECT REFERENCE TO ROK NATIONAL SECURITY.

3. SINA ILBO SEPTEMBER 17 EDITORIAL CRITICIZED MIYAZAWA REMARKS TO EFFECT THAT JAPAN-DPRK RELATIONS SHOULD BE BASED ON CLOSER SEOUL-TOKYO RELATIONS AS PRESAGING EQUIDISTANT JAPANESE DIPLO-MACY TOWARD NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA. SAME EDITORIAL WAS HOPEFUL ABOUT TREATMENT OF KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN. ALSO CHARACTERIZED PLEDGED CONTINUATION OF GOVERNMENT-BASED ECONOMIC COOPERATION AS "MOST SUCCESSFUL RESULT ACHIEVED" BY THE CONFERENCE. EDITORIAL CRITICIZED JAPANESE FAILURE TO DISCUSS SCOPE OF COOPER-ATION IN DETAIL BUT HOPED WORKING-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS WOULD IMPLEMENT COMMUNIQUE'S CALL FOR FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION.

4. CHUNGANG ILBO EDITORIAL SEPTEMBER 16 EMPHASIZED ROLE OF JAPAN IN KOREAN POWER BALANCE BUT USED ITS HEAVY ARTILLERY TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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CRITICIZE JAPANESE TRADE AND INVESTMENT PRACTICES. CITING THE 1965-1974 ROK TRADE DEFICIT WITH JAPAN OF 5,468 MILLION DOLLARS, EDITORIAL CRITICIZED RECENT JAPANESE RESTRICTIVE MEASURES AGAINST SUCH ROK PRODUCTS AS RAW SILK, TUNA AND PONGEE. PAPER ASSERTED THAT PAST UNHAPPY ROK-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP WILL BE ENDED ONLY IF BI-LATERAL RELATIONS ARE BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF RECIPROCITY AND EQUAL PARTNERSHIP.

COMMENT: EDITORIAL COMMENT REMAINS BALANCED, ALBEIT SOMEWHAT MORE CRITICAL THAN THE FIRST DAY AFTER THE CONFERENCE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE A STRENUOUS EFFORT TO PORTRAY THE MINISTERIAL MEETING AS A SUCCESS AND MOST EDITORIAL WRITERS SEEM

PREPARED TO WAIT FOR THE WORKING-LEVEL TALKS TO HAVE A CHANCE
TO PRODUCE SPECIFIC RESULTS. EDITS POINT UP HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE
THESE EFFORTS BASIC DISTRUST OF JAPANESE REMAINS IN KOREAN MINDS.
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